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Committee on Agriculture
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October 4, 2002

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The Honorable Felix J. Grucci, Jr.
Member of Congress
1505 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Felix:

I want to thank you once again for your strong leadership and support for the Farmland Protection Program so important to Long Island.

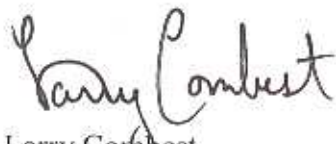
Since coming to Congress, you have impressed upon me not only the very profound contribution that Long Island has made to U.S. agriculture, but also the unique challenges faced by producers and all residents in large suburban centers.

In light of this, I thought you should know that your dedication to preserving farming on Long Island, your active promotion of green space to help address the issue of suburban sprawl, and your ongoing concern for resource conservation all figured greatly in the decision of this Congress to increase funding for the Farmland Protection Program by 18 times its previous level.

As you know, the Farmland Protection Program was funded at \$53.4 million over the 6 years of the 1996 Farm Bill and the original House version of the 2002 Farm Bill proposed to increase that amount to \$500 million over 10 years. But, it was in no small part thanks to you and all of your hard work that the Farmland Protection Program was ultimately funded at \$985 million over 10 years – again, an 18-fold increase. But, this is altogether fitting given that your Suffolk County is the genesis of farmland preservation initiatives.

Again, Felix, thank you for your strong leadership and support of the Farmland Protection Program, resource conservation, and other programs so important to the people of Long Island. I am looking forward to your continued advice and counsel.

Sincerely,



Larry Combest
Chairman